

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for processing response information from a pre-printed label in relation to bar code information on the label, comprising the steps of:
 - a) scanning bar code information and response information from a pre-printed label with a bar code reading means operatively connected with a processing means, wherein the label comprises an encoded bar code sequence having encoded bar code information, and an information indicia area, for optionally placing response information thereon, arranged in proximity to the bar code sequence on the label to be concurrently readable by the bar code reading means with the bar code sequence, and
 - b) processing the scanned information of step (a) with the processing means.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the processing means further comprises a decoding means and a data correlation means, wherein scanned data is decoded by the decoding means and decoded data is correlated with bar code information by the correlation means to generate correlated data responses.
3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the indicia area is visibly marked thereby indicating the presence of response information on the label.
4. The method according to claim 3, wherein a response ratio of visibly marked indicia areas versus unmarked indicia areas is determined in relation to a plurality of correlated data responses.

1 5. The method according to claim 3, further comprising the step of storing the
2 processed information of step(b) by a storing means.

1 6. The method according to claim 4, wherein the indicia area is visibly marked by
2 hand.

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1 7. A method for processing response information from a pre-printed label in relation
2 to bar code information on the label at the time of a consumer's purchase at a
3 transaction center, comprising the steps of:

- 4 a) scanning bar code information and response information from a pre-printed
5 label with a bar code reading means operatively connected with a
6 processing means,
7 wherein the label comprises
8 an encoded bar code sequence having encoded bar code information, and
9 an information indicia area, for optionally placing response information
10 thereon,
11 arranged in proximity to the bar code sequence on the label to be
12 concurrently readable by the bar code reading means with the bar code
13 sequence,
14 b) processing the scanned information of step (a) with the processing means,
15 wherein the processing means further comprises a decoding means, a data
16 correlation means and a computing means, wherein scanned data is
17 decoded by the decoding means and decoded data is correlated with bar
18 code information by the correlation means and by the computing means to
19 generate correlated data responses, and to provide transaction information
20 in response to the processed bar code information to the transaction center,
21 and
22 c) storing the processed information of step(b) by a storing means.

1 8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the indicia area is visibly marked
2 thereby indicating the presence of response information on the label.

- 1 9. A method for scanning a consumer response from a pre-printed label on a product
2 at the time of purchase, comprising the steps of:
3 a) providing a label for a predetermined product,
4 wherein the label comprises a bar code sequence having encoded bar code
5 information, and an information indicia area, for a consumer to optionally
6 mark a response therein, arranged in proximity to the bar code sequence on
7 the label to be concurrently readable by a scanning means with the bar
8 code sequence,
9 b) providing an inquiry statement to a consumer directing the consumer to
10 respond to the inquiry directly on the label, and
11 c) scanning the label at the time of purchase by the scanning means to
12 concurrently obtain the consumer response indicated from the indicia area
13 and the bar code information indicated from the bar code sequence.
- 1 10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the pre-printed label further comprises
2 the inquiry statement.
- 1 11. The method according to claim 9 further comprising the step of:
2 d) processing the scanned information of step (c) by a processing means to
3 determine the consumer response.
- 1 12. The method according to claim 11 further comprising the step of:
2 e) storing the consumer response of step (d) by a storing means.

- 1 13. A method for capturing consumer response from a pre-printed label on a
2 consumer-selected product at the time of purchase, comprising the steps of:
3 a) providing a label on the consumer-selected product,
4 wherein the label comprises a bar code sequence having encoded bar code
5 information, and an information indicia area, for a consumer to optionally
6 mark a response therein, arranged in proximity to the bar code sequence on
7 the label to be concurrently readable by a scanning means with the bar
8 code sequence, and
9 b) capturing the consumer response by
10 i) scanning the label at the time of purchase by the scanning means
11 ii) decoding the scanned information of step (ci),
12 iii) processing the decoded information of step (cii), and
13 iv) storing the processed consumer response by a storage means.
- 14 14. The method according to claim 13, wherein the label further comprises an inquiry
15 statement.
- 1 15. The method according to claim 14, wherein the inquiry statement directs the
2 consumer to respond to the inquiry by visibly marking the information indicia area
3 directly.

- 1 16. An information label, capable of being scanned by a scanning means, comprising
2 an encoded bar code sequence area for providing encoded bar code information
3 and at least one information indicia area, for optionally placing response
4 information thereon, arranged in proximity to the bar code sequence on the label.
- 1 17. The label according to claim 16 wherein the information indicia area is arranged
2 in proximity to the bar code sequence on the label to be concurrently readable by
3 the scanning means with the bar code sequence.
18. The label according to claim 16 further comprising an inquiry statement area.
19. The label according to claim 16 further comprising a pre-printed encoded bar code
sequence.
20. The label according to claim 16 further comprising a printed information indicia
area.
- 1 21. The label according to claim 18 wherein the inquiry statement area directs the
2 consumer to respond to the inquiry by visibly marking the information indicia area
3 directly.
- 1 22. The label according to claim 18 further comprising a printed inquiry in an inquiry
2 statement area.
- 1 23. The label according to claim 18 affixed to an item.

1 24. Packaging for a product having information label, capable of being scanned by a
2 scanning means, comprising an encoded bar code sequence area for providing
3 encoded bar code information and at least one information indicia area, for
4 optionally placing response information thereon, arranged in proximity to the bar
5 code sequence on the label, wherein the information indicia area is arranged in
6 proximity to the bar code sequence on the label to be concurrently readable by the
7 scanning means with the bar code sequence.

1 25. The packaging according to claim 24, wherein the label further comprises a pre-
2 printed inquiry statement area which directs the consumer to respond to the
3 inquiry by visibly marking the information indicia area directly.
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- 1 26. An inventory tracking method for determining future orders for a predetermined
2 item having a pre-printed information label, based on one or more consumer
3 responses received at the time of purchase on one or more labels of said
4 predetermined item, comprising the steps of:
5 a) providing a label on the product,
6 wherein the label comprises a bar code sequence having encoded bar code
7 information, an information indicia area, for a consumer to optionally
8 mark a response therein, arranged in proximity to the bar code sequence
9 such that the label is readable by a scanning means, and an inquiry
10 statement soliciting the consumer to affirmatively respond to future
11 purchases of the product,
12 b) scanning the label at the time of purchase by the scanning means to obtain the
13 consumer response indicated in the indicia area,
14 c) decoding the consumer response to be either marked or unmarked,
15 d) processing the consumer response in relation to planned orders for the product,
16 e) storing order information in relation to processed consumer responses, and
17 f) generating an order for the predetermined item based upon stored consumer
18 responses over a predetermined period of time.

1 27. A machine-readable medium, having encoded thereon program code, wherein,
2 when the program code is executed by a machine upon a predetermined event, the
3 machine implements the steps of:

- 4 a) scanning bar code information and response information from a pre-printed
5 label with a scanning means operatively connected with a processing
6 means and a computing means,
7 wherein the label comprises an encoded bar code sequence having
8 encoded bar code information, and at least one information indicia area,
9 for optionally placing response information thereon, wherein each indicia
10 area is arranged in proximity to the bar code sequence and each other
11 indicia area on the label to be concurrently readable by the scanning means
12 with the bar code sequence, such that the scanning means reads a bar code
13 sequence of a predetermined format and also reads a consumer response
14 from an information indicia area positioned at a predetermined location in
15 relation to the bar code sequence,
16 b) processing the scanned information of step (a) with the processing means, and
17 c) storing the consumer response information processed in step (b), by the
18 computing means.

1 28. The medium according to claim 27, wherein the scanning means is configurable to
2 scan a bar code sequence and at least one information indicia areas in one or more
3 differing arrangements.

1 29. A label reading system for concurrently reading information from a pre-printed
2 label, comprising:

3 a) a scanning means for scanning bar code information and response information
4 from a pre-printed label with the scanning means operatively connected
5 with a processing means and a computing means, wherein the label
6 comprises an encoded bar code sequence having encoded bar code
7 information, and an information indicia area, for optionally placing
8 response information thereon, arranged in proximity to the bar code
9 sequence on the label to be concurrently readable by the bar code reading
10 means with the bar code sequence, and

11 b) a program code for configuring the scanning means to concurrently read a bar
12 code sequence of a predetermined format and a consumer response from
13 an information indicia area positioned at a predetermined location in
14 relation to the bar code sequence.

15 30. The system according to claim 29, further comprising the steps of:

16 c) a decoding means for decoding the scanned information of step (a), and
17 d) a response means for providing purchase information in response to a decoded
18 bar code sequence to a display.

- 1 31. A method for processing a plurality of consumer responses about a labeled item
2 from a pre-printed label, comprising the steps of:
3 a) scanning bar code information and a plurality of consumer responses from a
4 pre-printed label with a scanning means operatively connected with a
5 computing means,
6 wherein the label comprises
7 an encoded bar code sequence having encoded bar code information, and
8 two or more information indicia areas, for optionally placing response
9 information thereon,
10 wherein each indicia area is arranged in proximity to the bar code
11 sequence and each other indicia area on the label to be concurrently
12 readable by the scanning means with the bar code sequence, and
13 b) processing the scanned information of step (a) with the computing means.
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1 32. A method of doing business in a retail store environment wherein a consumer's
2 response is digitally captured by a scanning means reading the consumer's
3 response on a predetermined product's bar code label, which has been marked by
4 a consumer in an indicia area on the label, at the time of purchase at a transaction
5 center, and the consumer's response is correlated with related information
6 regarding the predetermined product over a predetermined period of time,
7 comprising the steps of:
8 a) printing a label for a predetermined product in a retail environment, wherein the
9 label comprises an encoded bar code sequence having encoded bar code
10 information, and an information indicia area, for a consumer to place the
11 consumer response thereon by marking, arranged in proximity to the bar
12 code sequence on the label to be concurrently readable by the bar code
13 reading means with the bar code sequence,
14 b) positioning the label at a predetermined location on the product,
15 c) scanning the label of the predetermined product at the transaction center,
16 thereby scanning bar code information and consumer response information
17 from the label using a bar code reading means operatively connected with
18 a processing means, a decoding means and a computing means,
19 d) decoding the bar code information and the consumer response information with
20 the decoding means,
21 e) processing the decoded bar code information and the decoded consumer
22 response information with the processing means,
23 f) providing product transaction information in relation to the processed decoded
24 bar code information to the transaction center with the computing means
25 whereby product information about the predetermined product is
26 presented to the consumer, and
27 g) correlating consumer response information in relation to the decoded consumer
28 response information with the related information regarding the
predetermined product over a predetermined period of time.

- 1 33. The method according to claim 32, further comprising the step of:
2 h) generating a report for the predetermined product based upon the correlated
3 information of step (g).

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